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31 October 1978

NOTE FOR Mr. Ted Shackley

FROM:

[Redacted]

RE: Access Approvals

1. I have reviewed and discussed the fourth proposal to transfer Access Approval responsibilities from CT to the Security Committee.

2. As I mentioned during previous meetings on this issue, I see no value to bringing the Security Committee into this matter at all. Need-to-know continues to be a command decision. The roles of COMIREX, SIGINT Committee (and now the NRO) in the tasking and development loop more adequately address their special competence as to what it takes to get the job done and what price in the way of additional access approvals must be paid. Your proposal continues need-to-know with appropriate authorities and only adds an additional, unnecessary processing layer on the system.

3. Your memorandum to the DCI presents misleading emphasis to the one occasion when the Security Committee assisted in staffing a request for [Redacted] accesses. I can think of no occasion when all three Committees and the Special Security Center were involved in processing requests. The Security Committee has carefully not interceded in this process.

4. There is no intention of establishing under the Community Security Group responsibility for a centralized computerized data base of all SCI approvals. The CSG has no functional role in this area at this time, and none is planned for the future. The CIA Special Security Center's Compartmented Information Branch is the home of the community service on special access certifications and records. They handle SPECLE. Any upgrading of this service of common concern would be located within CIA, not the CSG. Any effort to upgrade the SPECLE system is years away. Further, NSA has taken no steps toward inputting their COMINT clearances

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into the SPECLE System and other departments and agencies are only slowly doing so. Since the only source for developing figures on access approvals is the SPECLE system, the incomplete data base we have today would be inappropriate to use in reporting trends to the DCI.

5. In view of any lack of net gain in either timeliness or accuracy resulting from transfer of responsibilities for access approvals, I could neither support the proposal nor recommend that the Chairman, Security Committee endorse it to Mr. Blake.



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